

The Messenger

June 2025

The monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church UCC of North Ridgeville

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From the Pastor – Pastor Kearstin (she/her)

Hello dear ones!

Welcome to June, a month where we transition from the liturgical season of Easter (focusing on resurrection and new life) to the season of Pentecost (focusing on Spirit, proclamation, sacred gifts, and the birth of the church). Many of you know that I spent a week in May at Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center for Preaching Camp, put on by the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. For a solid seven days, I lived in intentional community with 47 other campers (ordained and lay church folks), plus another 16 facilitators and preaching experts. As an introvert, it was exhausting; as a pastor, it was invigorating; as a church nerd, it was everything I could have dreamed of and more.

As I transition from “camp life” back to “everyday life,” the worship music from camp continues to play on a loop in my head. One of the first songs we learned was a Black gospel song by Houston Simmons; it goes like this:

*This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me
This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me
This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me
The world didn't give it, the world can't take it away*

And then you sing the same song, swapping out joy for love, peace, and strength.

As we Christians transition from Easter to Pentecost, this song is a timely reminder that while we exist in the world, our life and spirit are held tenderly by God, and nobody can take that from us.

In Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer writes that “Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.”

As the world around us sells us narratives about all the ways we lack, and all the ways that we should spend our money and consume new products to make us “whole,” this song from Houston Simmons is a testament to the creative God who made us, sustains us, and supports us always. Even though our culture sells us scarcity, we know that we are held and deeply grounded in the love of God that will never falter. May we continue to proclaim this counter-cultural Good News for all who have ears to hear it!

Every blessing,
Pastor Kearstin

Moderator’s Moment – Kris Dornan

Beloved church family,

As we approach the actual summer months of our calendar, we are leaving a month focused on a key topic I wanted to discuss today, that of mental health.

As ground setting, I myself am an adult that has a diagnosis of ADD, ADHD. My own mental health is not just something that is good to talk about from time to time, rather it’s something that I deal with every hour of every day.

Unfortunately, the challenges the world poses to us are forcing us to process data and information much faster than we had to even a year ago. In my opinion, help in the form of medication or therapies aren’t doing enough to deal with this every increasing problem.

So how can we help as a church family? I have a few thoughts!

- 1) Prayer – I would estimate that each of us either deal with mental health issues or are related to someone who does. Prayer is our way to ask for our creator to intercede in these situations where our own strength and determination falls short
- 2) Understanding – Our kids will have to deal with this more than we can even imagine – some health agencies are even putting forth the narrative that

ADD/ADHD behaviors are part of our evolution as a species to be able to process the information overload....so please support our kiddos whose behaviors reflect things happening in the brain that in the past may come across as bad behaviors, but it’s really just a way of coping for those of us whose brain does not relax, does not shut off, and needs to be completely engaged.

If you are out there and dealing with mental health issues, first off, know that you are loved by me, and your church community. There are many of us that are fighting similar battles, and know that there is grace, and love and listening ears ready to support and love you.

In love,
-Kris Dornan

Christian Education Corner – Mary Karlovec

June begins our Sunday School summer hiatus. Children 5 and under can play in the nursery during worship time although they are more than welcome in worship with their family. Those over the age of 5 will worship in church with their families. There will be clipboards with worksheets on the front pew for them to work on during worship if they would like them.



June 1st is our monthly “Family Sunday” and our **Clangy Change collection** will support Community Care’s summer lunch program with jars of peanut butter and jelly. Please bring your change to support this important outreach project.

Pentecost is Sunday, June 8th and it is also **Confirmation Sunday!** Please plan on being in worship to support our 3 youth who are being confirmed. Charlotte Dornan, Lily Dornan and

Dahlia Wolanski have met over the last 9 months to learn about our denomination, other religions, and most importantly their own faith. Special thanks to Krista O'Neill, Diana Goode and Mercy McCloskey for helping to mentor our three youth. Also a huge thank you to Shirley Suynak for making their stoles and Heather Smith for her support with the confirmation program. After worship, please join the Board of Christian Education in welcoming our newest members of First Congregational UCC at a special coffee hour in their honor. As it is Pentecost Sunday, **please wear RED!**

June 20-27, 6 youth and 2 adults will be traveling to Kentucky with others from churches in the Heartland Conference of the UCC for our annual mission trip to help the area of Lotts Creek. Five of our youth have been there before (for Ben and Beth Dornan, this is year 4) and it is always a life changing experience. Alice Whitaker, the director of the Lotts Creek program, recently died. This year will be a hard trip for everyone who knew her and the legacy she leaves behind. Please keep everyone who will gather there that week in your prayers. And speaking of the mission trip, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the fundraisers to help pay for this trip. Special thanks to the Outreach Board for supporting the youth with the Dine to Donate at Applebee's in Avon on June 5th. We are still in need of funds as it will cost around \$3,000 to send all 8 people on this trip (in addition to the cost of each person going, we need to rent an 11 or 15 passenger van to get all of us there!) so your support is very much appreciated!

Finally, for those that have not heard, I have finally "officially" retired after a teaching career of 48 years. I retired once in June 2013 when Matt first became ill with encephalitis but was back in the classroom that fall in a new role as a reading teacher/tutor. I will miss my colleagues and especially the kids but I know it is time to take the advice of some wise family and friends and retire. Teaching has always been a passion

not a job and I am truly blessed to say I loved every minute of it! Thanks be to God!

Outreach Committee News – Karen Farmer

June, the threshold dividing spring and summer, is upon us. It's a month brimming with beautiful traditions – graduations, weddings, vacations, Flag Day, Father's Day and Juneteenth. It's a time when we slow our pace and take the time to appreciate the beauty of the world, God's gift to us. As we pause to rewind, may we use this lull to refresh not only our spirits but lift the spirits of those around us.

The Outreach Committee hopes to lift the spirits of our community in several ways. We are donating \$100 each to Community Care and Neighborhood Alliance this month for their programs. We are providing a \$50 DoorDash gift card for the Moyseenko family as they welcome a new baby to the fold. We are also sponsoring the "Dine to Donate" event at the Avon Commons Applebee's on June 5 and hope that the congregation turns out in full force to support this effort which will, in turn, support the youth mission trip to Lotts Creek. Flyers to present to the restaurant wait staff are available later in this newsletter and in the Sunday bulletin. Finally, we offer our heartfelt thanks to those of you who supported the One World Shop mobile store with your purchases of fair trade items made by artisans living in poverty around the world.

As you enjoy this season of refreshment and escape, may you pause often to reflect and thank God for all that He has provided.

Deacons' Desk

There will be communion twice in June – the regularly scheduled first Sunday, and again on June 8th for Confirmation Sunday.

June 8th is also Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is a Christian holiday which takes place on the 49th day after Easter. We ask that everyone try to wear red that day.

Trustees' Turn – Roy Dreger

In last month's newsletter article I mentioned that the fellowship hall improvements were almost done; all we were waiting on was the floor to be cleaned and waxed. Well, that was done at the beginning of the month and what a difference! I think that it is well known that with all the use the hall gets, it is not going to last, so enjoy it while you can. And, once again, thanks to Pat Kyle for the funding that allowed the renovation work to be done.

The Trustees have received notice from Deb Sebastian that she is resigning from the cleaner position at the end of May. We thank Deb for her hard work to make the church a cleaner, more pleasant place to worship. However, that leaves us with another opening to fill. Once again, Stephanie Matis has stepped up to take on this role as well as the custodial position until a permanent replacement can be found. The Trustees have talked about combining the two positions (cleaner and custodian/maintenance) into one position as it was in the past. This would create a part-time job with more hours which might be more attractive to someone looking for more than just five hours a week. We are still looking for a permanent replacement for the position(s), so if you know of someone looking for a little extra income, please let them know about this job opening. (The combined position would include approximately 15 hours per week.)

Long-time friend of the church Ron Short saw all the dandelions in the lawn and has provided the church with lawn service to help to get them under control. Thank you, Ron! And speaking of the lawn, thanks go out to Jack Fitts for taking the time to mow the lawn while we continue the employee search.

And while we are talking about making the church look good, remember the **clean-up day on June 7** starting at 9 am if you are not going to the Pride Parade. We are sorry for the conflict, but the date was one that the 4-H

group had put on their calendar, and they provide much needed help for the project.

Mercy McCloskey is still working with Liz Wolanski to find grant money that would help provide another entrance/exit from the sanctuary for those with mobility issues. Given the current state of grant funding, this may be a difficult task. And Jon Eaton is still checking to see what might work for a cover at the parking lot entrance to the elevator.

Thanks to everyone that helps make the church a better, more accessible place to worship!



During the summer, many families travel or go on vacations. School is out, and normal weekly rhythms are disrupted. Overall, church attendance drops in the summer, and there is also a general decrease in engagement. Statistics from the Unstuck Group indicate that summer attendance falls by 23% in June and a whopping 34% in July.

As attendance falls, so does giving. For many people, giving is tied to their regular attendance and involvement in church activities. When this routine is interrupted during the summer months, it results in a decrease in giving. And this drop in giving creates real challenges for us. It's tough to budget when you're not sure how much money will be coming in, and this can make it difficult to plan for events or ministries that require funding.

In case you're not clear, recurring giving using our online giving platform Tithely allows automated, scheduled donations set by you. The contributions are made automatically at regular intervals, such as weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly and even if you don't attend on a given Sunday.

Giving is an act of worship, a way to honor God and demonstrate our trust in Him as our provider (Proverbs 3:9-10). Recurring giving is one way of faithfully stewarding the resources you've been given. It's not a command by any means, but it is a specific way to fulfill stewardship commands and orient your life toward generosity.

Join the others who have set up their recurring online giving! It's easy to do (honest!) and then you don't have to worry about bringing or sending your offering each week/month or writing a check. It really is easy to do; but if you run into any problems, contact Linda or Pastor Kearstin and they will help you get set up! Your financial partnership helps us to grow as a vibrant and diverse community, with a forward-thinking and inclusive approach to Christianity!

Tithely Giving is an easy-to-use platform that will allow you to give online and on your phone. You can make both one-time and recurring gifts, give with a credit/debit card or ACH transaction, and even cover the fees (which will help your gift go even farther!)

Scan the QR code to go to the First Congregational Church Tithely Giving page!



Summer Series: Spiritual Practices Beyond the Church

Over the summer months, Pastor Kearstin will be exploring spiritual meaning-making systems through a progressive Christian lens. Have you ever been curious about how Human Design, astrology, or tarot might compliment your faith? Join us once a month for a focused introductory workshop on these three systems. First up: Human Design 101 on Tuesday June 10th at 7p.

In this workshop, we'll learn about Human Design as a meaning-making system that actively *seeks* diversity and difference. There will be time to explore your own HD chart and Pastor Kearstin will go over all the basics with you. Think of it as a juicy cosmic personality quiz that will help you lean into your unique gifts and flow with ease in your spheres of influence.

****** You will need your date of birth, time of birth, and place of birth for this workshop. Please RSVP for the 7p workshop at the [QR code below](#), so we know how many folks are coming and where we should meet!

human design 101.png



***Just A Note of Thanks:** Since I have been filling in for Linda the past 2 weeks and got to help put the newsletter together, I thought I would take the opportunity to let you know John and I will be moving to Wadsworth on June 3rd. We felt it was time to be in closer proximity to our kids and grandkids, especially since our youngest daughter is expecting her 3rd child in November. The current plan is to continue our membership here (although our attendance may be sporadic), plus, I can't give up playing the handbells (way too much fun). So this is not good-bye, just an adjustment and a chance to let you all know what a treasure you all truly are.*

Lynne Petroff

GREETERS

June	
1	Diana Goode, Teri Loy
8	Karen Farmer, Millie Gilly
15	Paul Wolanski, Paula Dudek
22	Sara Bowman, Lynne Petroff
29	Jane Woravka, George Beers

NURSERY

June	
1	Denise Speer
8	Shirley Sunyak
15	Linda Matis
22	Karen Veliconia
29	Mary Karlovec

Birthdays & Anniversaries

6/5	Lynne Petroff
6/5	Stephanie Matis
6/9	Millie Gilly
6/15	Liz Wolanski
6/16	Barb Zinsmeister
6/17	Ben Dornan
6/19	Carol Scharmann
6/29	Charlotte Dornan
6/2	Dale & Becky Williams
6/21	John & Lynne Petroff
6/23	Greg & Paula Dudek
6/27	Roy & Karen Dreger

Women's Book Club: All gatherings are at the church at 7 p.m. unless noted otherwise.

June 16: Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan

July 21: Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman



**APPLEBEE'S WILL DONATE 15%
OF YOUR CHECK TO:**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

Date: Thurs., June 5, 2025 **35916 Detroit Rd.**
Time: 11 AM-Close **Avon, OH 44011**

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 - Choose your menu items
 - At checkout, enter code: **DOINGOOD**
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 - Checkout and pickup order at designated time
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 - Present this flyer at pickup (paper copy or digital)

Drink Responsibly
Drive Responsibly

Valid on dine-in and To Go orders, not valid on delivery. Valid at location listed above on scheduled date only. 15% donation excludes tax and gratuity. To Go orders containing alcohol must be called into restaurant, 21 and older.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Outreach 9 am Worship 10:30 am Communion Clangy change collection Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	2 AA Women 7 pm	3 CE 7 pm Trustees 7 pm AA 1 st Step 8 pm	4 	5 Applebee's Dining to Donate 11 am – close AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	6 	7 Spring clean up 9 am Pride parade 11 am step off AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
8 Pentecost – Wear Red Confirmation Communion Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	9 Council 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	10 Human Design 101 7pm AA 1 st Step 8 pm	11 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	12 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	13 	14 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
15 Father's Day Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour AA Men 7:30 pm	16 Newsletter articles due Women's book club 7 pm AA Women 7 pm	17 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	18 	19 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	20 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Lotts Creek Mission Trip 6/20-6/27</div>	21 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
22 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Service at Indep. Village 2 pm AA Men 7:30 pm	23 AA Women 7 pm	24 AA 1 st Step 8 pm	25 4-H 7 pm (rain loc.)	26 AA Women 6 pm Al Anon 7:30 pm	27 	28 AA Women 9 am Couples Recovery 6 pm
29 Worship 10:30 am Fellowship hour Deacons 11:30 am AA Men 7:30 pm	30 AA Women 7 pm					

